

**Amendments to the Specification**

On page 55 please replace the paragraph beginning with – *Almost at the same time* – and the following four lines beginning with – *Also, by the action* – and ending with –*gear portion* -- the following language:

Almost at the same time of the execution of the sheet-expeller operation, the control gear 24 is rotated by the planetary gear 39a (see Figs. 7A and 7B) to an angle 8 shown in Fig. 10. Then, the return lever 13 advances again into the recording sheet conveying passage so as to prevent the leading ends of recording sheets 20 from falling into the separating portion.

Also, by the action of the control cam (not shown), the release cam 28 rotates in the direction L in Fig. 11D to enable the leading end 23a of the lock lever 23 to bite the gear portion